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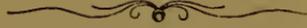








# FIRM GROUND.



THOUGHTS

ON

LIFE AND FAITH,

BY

GEORGE Mc KNIGHT.

33



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PROLOGUE TO PART I.

---

SOME record I would leave of trustful hours,  
When livelier sympathy and kindlier mood  
Of feeling harmonized the mental powers,  
And seemed to make more clearly understood  
The casual evil and essential good  
Of human motives; though full many a deed  
Of sin seemed to require such plentitude  
Of pity, reason would to love concede,  
Divine compassion must respond to such great need.

Of holy hours, when Duty to incline  
The will to yield a full obedience,  
Spake with a tone of majesty divine ;  
And, pointing to no other recompense,  
Gave by approving look immediate sense  
Of great peculiar favor God bestows  
Upon the just ; though lawful consequence  
For both the evil and the good dispose  
Events, now making glad, now darkening life with woes.

Triumphant hours, when though the changeful look  
Of Fortune darkly frowned, it terrified  
Not even the delicate delights that brook  
No hot pursuit, but only will abide  
In souls where love and knowledge are allied,  
And, blended, issue forth through gazing eyes ;  
Making a vision so serene and wide,  
The narrowest horizon will comprise  
The beauty of all lands, the glory of all skies.

And of more solemn hours, when Birth and Death

As Life's successive ministers were viewed ; —

One to inspire, one to withdraw the breath,

As Destiny ordains ; and though they stood

In mutual antithetic attitude

Among the powers obeying Life's control,

A common end was seen to be pursued

By both, and, to the calmly reasoning soul,

Death evermore appeared the nearest to the goal.

Would that in those serener seasons, when

The sun of truth seemed with unclouded light

To beam upon me, farther reaching ken

Had to the eye belonged, or finer sight ;

Or I had stood upon some lofty height

Of learning, where great minds abide alone ;

That looking near or far, I haply might

Have then discovered, and to others shown,

Some precious verities still waiting to be known.

But though the truths I have recorded here  
    May be familiar as the flowers that grow  
Along the wayside, yet they did appear  
    Into my soul immediately to flow  
    From their first source ; for I did surely know  
Through my own new and clear experience  
    Their truthfulness, did feel the warming glow  
Imparted to them in that fountain whence  
Truths issue and disperse in radiant effluence.

And does not Nature own the wayside flowers ?

    Perchance her rarest beauty is revealed  
In dainty petals distant dewy bowers  
    Of unfrequented forests have concealed  
    From common vision, or the cultured field  
Brought forth. Yet could we but discern the true  
    And perfect meaning Nature fain would yield  
Unto our minds in flowers we daily view,  
Their beauty might appear as precious and as new.

And though care-burdened men, day after day,

Go and return in haste, and give no heed

To blossoms seen so often by the way ;

Yet haply if a resting traveller, freed

A season from demands of want and need,

Should note a lowly modest comeliness

In blooming wayside herbage, then, indeed,

Pure, peaceful thoughts his spirit might possess,

And even some after hours, remembered peace might

    bless.



PART I.

—

LIFE.



## G I F T S .

---

“Who maketh thee to differ?”

---

**B**ROTHER, my arm is weaker far than thine ;  
And thou, my brother, seest a subtile hue  
Of beauty, overspreading many a view,  
Too delicate to thrill such brain as mine.  
And yet, O brothers both, by many a sign  
God shows for me as warm love as for you :  
With equal care his light and rain and dew  
Cherish the sturdy tree and clinging vine.  
Be thou not proud of thy more massive brawn !  
Nor thou, because within thy brain each thread,  
Through which the thought pulsations pass and spread  
From cell to cell, has been more tensely drawn !  
God's forces made you what you are, why then  
Should you expect the reverence of men ?

## D U E S .

---

“Ye are not your own.”

---

**A** GAINST a soul the accusing angel brought  
 Complaint, and said, “The earth has not concealed  
 The sweat of one who tilled unpaid thy field—  
 ’T is risen to Heaven !”

“He served but as he ought,”

The soul replied. “A suffering wretch besought  
 Help of the knowledge God to me revealed,  
 And in one hour all his disease was healed ;  
 For this a hundred weeks he duly wrought.”  
 Then from the Throne the words of judgment came :  
 “The powers wherewith my servants are endowed  
 Are for my service ; if, possession-proud,  
 One for his own behoof or glory claim  
 Their use and increase, he will rob his Lord —  
 Not his the faithful servant’s great reward.”

S U U M C U I Q U E ?  

---

I F finer powers within thy brain inhere,  
Part of mankind's best heritage is placed  
In thy safe keeping. Sad it were to waste  
In hard work of the hands a gift so dear.  
But should'st thou ever from a loftier sphere  
Review thy life — its history retraced  
Through soul-impressions deep and uneffaced —  
Within a world where men from year to year  
Wrought painfully in body weariness ;  
And, while thou shared'st in the pleasant use  
Of what their labor struggled to produce,  
Thy own strong arm ne'er felt the irksome stress  
Of that hard toil,— forsooth I fear a trace  
Of shame will overspread thy angel face.

## THE SOUL'S MEASURE.

---

DOST thou of all attainments value those  
Most that enlarge thy soul? and would'st be shown  
A sign, whereby it clearly may be known  
How much, from year to year, thy spirit grows?  
By as much more as others' joys and woes,  
Through wider sympathy, are made thine own,  
By so much in soul stature hast thou grown.

The bounds of personality that close  
Around uncultured spirits narrowly,  
Have been so far extended, and contain  
So much the more of conscious life's domain;  
And so much has thy knowledge grown to be  
Like that of clearest souls, whose bounding walls  
Will cast no shadow where the soul-light falls.

## TIME'S BEST PROMISE.

---

O HAPPY thou, whose daily work supplies  
To others joys, that else would never be!  
For thine shall be the happiness and glee  
Of many hearts, and thine the goodliest prize  
The future showeth to fore-looking eyes:  
For safely are reserved in store for thee  
Occasions for yet nobler charity,—  
It may be for sublime self-sacrifice.  
The day may come when much of that delight  
Shall in unmingled purity be thine,  
Which fills the souls of messengers divine;  
Who, with invisible and silent flight,  
O'er the abodes of mortals have bestrown  
Dear blessings, and forever are unknown.

## ALL SEEK THE GOOD.

---

“And one far off, divine event,  
To which the whole creation moves.”

---

DESPISE thou not thy neighbor, though the goal  
Of his endeavors far remote have stood,  
From that which thine have worthily pursued.  
The good he gains may be a scanty dole;  
Yet 'twould dishonor Him whose high control  
Directs the world, to think that aught but good  
Has been from his omnipotence endued  
With power of drawing any human soul.  
Though when into men's motives we inquire,  
Sad heedlessness of right we there may find,—  
Negations dark that shock the searching mind,—  
Yet whatso'er incitement prompts desire  
Is Nature's effort toward the Good to lead,  
But lacking oft just guidance for the deed.

## LES MISERABLES.

---

IF you have pity, O give not the whole  
To those whose hopes are dead, though in their dirge

The moans of present suffering sadly merge :  
Spare some to those who yet as seasons roll,  
Shall live beneath their base desires' control ;

Whom guilty hopes and secret fears shall urge  
To ceaseless, toilsome efforts, with the scourge  
Of discontentment, while the weary soul  
No satisfying peace and rest shall find.

In devious ways they know not, some proceed ;  
And see not far nor clearly whither lead  
The branching paths they choose : and some, not blind,  
But driven forward by resistless power,  
Approach with conscious steps the torturing hour.

## THE ARRAIGNMENT OF CHASTISEMENT.

---

### I.

**B**EFORE the throne of Justice, Clemency  
 In sorely punished man's behalf, arraigned  
 Stern Chastisement, and thus her prayer sustained  
 For lightened penance :

“ Man was never free.

Where'er attraction drew most potently,  
 His will has followed — could not have refrained.  
 Volition by its own law is constrained ;  
 For the resultant, whatso'er it be,  
 Of all the motives surely must prevail.  
 Is't said the will might make itself a source  
 Of new created counteracting force ?  
 Nay, that divine prerogative would fail !  
 What would incite its use to shun the ends,  
 Whereto the sum of all incentives tends ? ”

## THE ARRAIGNMENT OF CHASTISEMENT.

## II.

BUT Pity, though so often for man's sake,  
With prayers of Clemency her own are blent,  
Delayed not then to utter clear dissent.  
With wonted tears, unwonted words she spake :  
“ O cruel kindness ! that from men would take  
Aught that has power Sin's impulse to prevent,  
Though 'twere but selfish fear of punishment !  
Such fear's removal from the mind might make  
The nearly balanced, oscillating scale  
Of a yet guiltless will, sink to the side  
Of crime, and all the woes to crime allied.  
Then let the penalties of law not fail !  
Not mine a wish from sinners to forefend  
Correcting Chastisement, their truest friend.”

## THE ARRAIGNMENT OF CHASTISEMENT.

## III.

THEN Justice rendered judgment: "I decree  
A good and needful order of events,  
And Chastisement, my minister, from thence  
Derives his duty and authority.  
I give to all alike the right to be ;  
To all alike the right of self-defence,  
And to prevent unlawful violence  
By warding off a coming injury.  
And well with all my precepts it consents  
If one, whose unrestrained desires invade  
Another's equal right, himself is made  
To feel a hard, deterring consequence.  
If he transgress, his trespass cannot bar  
The other's right,— his own is quenched thus far."

## THE INEVITABLE PENANCE.

---

**A** GAINST thy penance thou wilt plead in vain  
That laws their full control o'er wills exert :  
The scourging of remorse 'twill not avert !  
To this sad knowledge thou shalt soon attain,—  
The spirit's sufferings, like the body's pain,  
Can not be measured by the ill-desert  
The test of reason certifies. The hurt  
Thy soul will feel, if some base impulse gain  
Dominion o'er thy will, and darkly blot  
Thy life,—though much thou longest to make real  
The beauty of a noble life-ideal, —  
Will be as keen, though reason doubteth not  
That, in the struggle of that lapsing hour,  
Thy low incentives had resistless power.

## THE MINISTRY OF REMORSE.

---

DOES conscience with most bitter chiding speak ?

The unremitting anguish thou must bear !

No work of merit, reasoning thought nor prayer

Can cleanse thy life of stains that foully reek.

Is there no remedy ? One only seek,—

Let just and rigorous remorse not dare

Thy self-abasing penance yet to spare,

Until endurance, lasting, willing, meek,

Imbue thy life with sweet humility.

O penitent, unwise were thy resort

To dull, benumbed forgetfulness, to thwart

The painful salutary ministry

Of one, divinely sent, who hath the power

To add so dear a grace to thy soul's dower.

M E A N S   O F   R E S C U E .  

---

**L**AWS uncreated and omnipotent  
Have shaped thy being, though to sin 'twas made  
So prone. A hard lot was upon thee laid :  
But think not 'twas for thee malignly meant !  
And though stern Chastisement will not relent  
When aims of thine another's right invade,  
Yet know, the Righteousness supreme, to aid  
Thy woful weakness, hath this angel sent.  
And if thou art forgiven by God or men,  
Know that a willingness to suffer pain<sup>d</sup>  
And loss, for others' happiness and gain,  
Touches thy soul. O, if thou feel it then,  
From sinful aims, that have thy will enslaved,  
Thou may'st by that love-kindling sense be saved.

## A VISION OF FORGIVENESS.

## I.

IN a sweet dream I viewed, with vision clear,  
A region where departed souls abode.

Bright rivers through the blooming valleys flowed,  
And fragrant breezes murmuring soothed the ear ;  
But all the souls with sin were stained and sere.

I marvelled and bespake an angel there :

“Should souls like these abide in this sweet air ?

By these pure streams ?” The angel answered : “Here  
The air is God’s own breath of pitying love.

Forgiveness is diffused unseen therein,

And gives it balmy sweetness, until sin

Attracting from below, it from above

Descends as rain and dew ; whence are supplied

These streams, wherein stained souls are purified.”

## A VISION OF FORGIVENESS.

---

 II.

“**B**UT must not souls like these, so seared and scarred,  
 Insensible to love’s warm breath remain ?

And though forgiveness wash away each stain,  
 Is not their comeliness forever marred ? ”

I asked. The angel answered : “ Naught so hard  
 The love of God is shed thereon in vain !

These souls, though calloused deep by sin and pain,  
 In this sweet air, made warm by his regard,

At length will feel a softening influence,

Melting the indurations sin has made.

Then knowledge of the good must needs pervade  
 Each soul, and rouse such holy penitence,

The pardon freely poured in these pure streams

Will cleanse its stains, and heal its scars and seams.”

## RECTITUDE.

---

WHEN hard and painful hindrance has withstood  
Thy course, pursuing Duty's paths that lie  
Distinctly traceable to every eye,  
And fair words in thy mind's more troubled mood,  
Have promised thy desires undoubted good,  
That far outweighed all ills thou couldst descry  
Borne in the consequence, to justify  
One slight departure from thy rectitude ;  
If still thy moral precepts held control,  
And from the right thou did'st not turn aside,  
Thy human soul has proved itself allied  
Most closely to the great majestic Soul  
Of Nature, who will not, for any cause,  
Depart the least from her eternal laws.

## DISCERNMENT OF RIGHT THROUGH SYMPATHY.

---

THE lines of good and evil consequence  
That radiate afar from every deed,  
Thou wilt not clearly see nor justly heed,  
Unless endowed with sympathetic sense  
Of others' joys and griefs. And only thence  
Arises thy clear knowledge of the need  
Of self-restraint, determined and decreed  
By rights of others, for their just defence.  
Therefore to make thy moral impulse strong,  
Its aim unfaltering and its scope defined,  
Strive evermore to form within thy mind  
The feelings that to other lives belong ;  
And, on that stepping stone, rise to the sight  
Of the divine, unchanging laws of right.

## THE HIGHEST UTILITY.

---

THE soul must rise above the selfish care  
That so beclouds its vision, ere its view  
Of human life, impersonal and true,  
And well defining, renders it aware  
Of that which is forever good and fair ;  
Which for itself the right unquestioned claims  
To arbitrate between conflicting aims ;  
Whose seal on Duty's warrant places there  
Authority that may not be withstood ;  
Whose umpirage alone can bring the strife  
Between the various elements of life  
To that accord which is the highest good ;  
Whose clear decision seems a high behest  
To conscience in the name of God addressed.

## CLEAR ASSURANCE.

---

“If thou workest at that which is before thee, following right reason, seriously, vigorously, calmly, without allowing anything to distract thee, —”

### I.

THERE is too much on earth to mourn and rue,  
 Too much of body pain in every land,  
 And agony of soul, when thou hast scanned  
 Our human life, to take a mirthful view !  
 O, soberly and vigorously pursue  
 The task required by duty at thy hand :  
 Ne'er let a vagrant impulse make demand  
 Upon endeavors to thy life-work due.  
 And, trusting God's great purpose doth enclose  
 The purposes wherewith his creatures act,  
 Accept with equal tolerance each fact,  
 Whether it aid thy efforts or oppose ;  
 As unperturbed, if they in failure end,  
 As if success their final zeal attend.

## CLEAR ASSURANCE.

---

“But keeping thy divine part pure, as if thou should’st be bound to give it back immediately.”

### II.

**B**E mindful always that thou art a child  
 Of Nature’s hope. The God-like soul, on earth  
 Became once more incarnate at thy birth.  
 Watch well! keep thy divine part undefiled,  
 Unvexed by envy, calmly reconciled  
 To whatsoe’er for thee the years bring forth —  
 Disease, toil, penury, unhonored worth.  
 Keep thy heart’s feelings sweet and kind and mild,  
 Though haughty glances of the unworthy proud  
 Cast on thy merit unprovoked disdain;  
 And let no selfish purpose with its train  
 Of troubling cares, even for a day becloud  
 The clearness of thy spirit, making dull  
 Thy vision of the good and beautiful.

CLEAR ASSURANCE.

---

“— If thou holdest to this, expecting nothing  
and fearing nothing, —”

III.

NOT as it looks, will be thy coming state.

It falsely looms to both thy hopes and fears.

Unwise is he, with prying eye, who peers

'Neath the unturned pages of the book of fate.

Yet whether good or evil hours await

Thy coming in the far successive years,

Thou may'st foreknow by that which now appears —

All thou should'st wish to know may'st calculate.

For in thy heart's affections thou can'st see

What thou becomest as the days go by :

Think not by skilled device to modify

The strict fulfillment of the high decree,

That more and more like the sublime or low

Ideals thou dost cherish, thou shalt grow.

## CLEAR ASSURANCE.

---

“— But satisfied with thy present activity according to nature, —”

## IV.

SAY not all blessings of thy husbandry  
Are insecure until the groaning wain  
Bears to thy barn the shocks of golden grain!  
One harvest was already ripe for thee  
While yet unseeded lay thy fallow lea: —  
A harvest that without the summer rain  
May wave abundantly upon the plain,  
For souls to reap with glad festivity.  
O, tiller, though thy fields yield no increase,  
Because the fleeting clouds their rain refuse,  
Its best reward thy labor need not lose;  
For thine may be the sweet contentful peace  
The soul may draw from willing, worthy doing,  
While yet the still eluding end pursuing.

## CLEAR ASSURANCE.

---

“— And with heroic truth in every word and sound which thou utterest, thou shalt live happy.”

*Thoughts of M. Aurelius Antoninus.*

V.

**B**UT little harm thy error works to thee,  
 Though it continue long, unless, indeed,  
 Through self-deception to it thou accede.  
 Of that beware! Thy lasting hurt 'twill be!  
 For if in willfulness thou yield the key  
     That opes the soul for Truth to enter in,  
     Unto her enemy, how can she win  
 Thenceforth an entrance? O, watch jealously,  
 If veiled desire persuasively entreat  
     Thy reason for the form of an assent,  
     To give some fair or subtile argument  
 Admittance into Truth's peculiar seat!  
     Lest treason to the truth, within thy soul,  
     Deliver it to falsehood's hard control.

## THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

---

### I.

**W**HEN thy best efforts fail, when day by day  
 Thy heart grows sick of hope deferred, and still  
 New obstacles arise, and omens ill  
 Threaten thy future, art thou moved to pray?  
 'Tis well the good incentive to obey.  
 Pray for a confirmation of thy will  
 In fealty to duty — to fulfill  
 All her behests till she commands to stay  
 The strife,— from unavailing toil to rest.  
 But with all precious benefits of prayer —  
 Peace, strengthened purpose, fortitude to bear  
 Life's evils, thou shalt be most richly blest  
 If, all thy heart's desires comprised in one,  
 Thou art content to pray — “**THY WILL BE DONE.**”

## THE PRAYER OF THE RIGHTEOUS.

## II.

DOST thou desire the Father of us all  
To watch with kindlier providence o'er thee  
Than others? and with importunity  
Of strong desires, dost thou upon Him call,  
That special influence from heaven may fall  
To bring some lingering joy more speedily?  
Or heal thee of thy grievous malady  
When thoughts of early death thy breast appall?  
Not mine a wish to lessen aught thy trust  
In power divine. Yet, haply, better aid  
Had been received, if thus thy heart had prayed:  
O Father, Thou to all art good and just;  
To help my hope to bloom, myself to live,  
I ask no more than thou to all dost give.

## ELIHU'S ARGUMENT.

“If thou art righteous, what givest thou to Him?”

## I.

**H**EAR me, O Job, and heed my words. Although  
 Upon the name of the Most High thou call,  
 And render truth and righteousness to all,—  
 Yea, on the worthy poor thy wealth bestow,—  
 The wind from out the wilderness will blow  
 As strongly, though it strike thy dwelling's wall;  
 The fire of heaven as fatally will fall,  
 Although the flocks be thine that graze below.  
 For thinkest thou thy goodness will augment  
 His changeless love? Or, emulous of thine,  
 More active grow benevolence divine?  
 His goodness never sleeps! His powers are sent  
 To do their needful tasks, and in each work  
 Of seeming waste, conserving efforts lurk.

## ELIHU'S ARGUMENT.

“If thou hast sinned, what dost thou against Him?”

## II.

IF thou should'st scorn Jehovah's high behest ;  
Should'st hear unmoved the orphan's cry of pain ;  
And all the toil-won harvest should'st retain,  
Though famine sore upon thy plowmen pressed ;  
The clouds of God above thy fields would rest,  
And shed the early and the latter rain ;  
Nor thorns nor weeds would lessen aught the gain  
Of barley or of wheat thou gatherest.  
Would thy weak wickedness repel the love  
Of the Almighty, when with bounteous hand  
He sows the seed of plenty on thy land ?  
Behold the skies, how far they stretch above !  
So high is He, howe'er thy sins increase,  
Resentment will not mar His holy peace.

## ELIHU'S ARGUMENT.

---

“For a man like thyself is thy wrong, and for a son of man thy righteousness.”

## III.

**B**UT if to all thou render righteously,  
 And for all kindly deeds thy loins thou gird,  
 On men a benefit will be conferred,  
 That haply yet may reach far years to be.  
 And thou shalt treasure in thy memory  
 Full many a thankful look and grateful word,—  
 Perhaps of some whose hope fled ere they heard  
 Thy footfalls, bringing rescue sure with thee.  
 The blessings which the humble poor will breathe  
 Upon thee, through each pathway thou shalt trace,  
 Will follow thee to thy last resting place.  
 There, while thou sleepest peacefully beneath,  
 Like a low cloud, that outbreathed gratitude  
 On thy remembered grave will seem to brood.

THE RETROSPECT.

---

“Consciousness comes after bliss.”

---

OUR lives are often happier than we know.  
 The waters of each stream of life discrete,  
 Through all their depth and width with joy are sweet,  
 Whether they roughly rush or smoothly flow.  
 Pleasures are ripples bright that seaward go ;  
 But if the current adverse influence meet,  
 The waves upheaved and moved in forced retreat  
 Against the stream, are surges of life's woe.  
 And consciousness doth on the surface seem  
 To feel both waves and ripples, but it sinks  
 Seldom into the depths, nor often drinks  
 Of the profounder sweetness of the stream : —  
 But o'er the past if pensive Memory sweep,  
 She sees how bright the current and how deep.

## REACHING FORTH.

---

THOUGH fondly we review both hopes and fears,  
The joys and even the griefs that once we knew,  
We never wish again to live them through.  
'Tis not because in that dead past appears  
Too much of irksome toil, too many tears ;  
Nor yet because of doubt if Memory's view  
Of the delights they held be just and true,  
That back to life we would not call those years.  
We feel that should our vanished joys revive,  
They would not satisfy to-day's desire.  
Thought dwells on them as earnest of the higher  
And more complete delights for which we strive —  
Spurred ever onward by the hope of bliss,  
More satisfying than has been, or is.

## THE ESTRANGEMENT OF HAPPINESS.

---

  
I.

TO neither past nor future giving heed,  
At first the soul enjoyed the present good ;  
And Happiness bestowed beatitude  
That well sufficed for all the present need.  
But soon as Hope came, promising to lead  
To bliss that in the distance dimly viewed,  
With perfect sweetness seemed to be imbued,  
And from the unsatisfying wholly freed,  
The soul grew eager for the yet ungained ;  
And, pressing forward with continual haste,  
Would scarcely linger long enough to taste  
The offered joys that present hours contained.  
Thus Happiness was first estranged, aggrieved  
Because her favors were so ill received.

## THE ESTRANGEMENT OF HAPPINESS.

## II.

THE soul, Hope-led, was prompted to pursue  
Expected joys by Memory, who placed  
In sight her tablets, whereupon were traced  
Pictures that seemed of future bliss a view,  
Though all their soft, harmonious tints were due  
To the refracted radiance from the past.  
But when the longed-for joys were reached at last,  
Harsh Memory, with rude words and untrue,  
Chided the present Happiness, complaining  
That all the former sweetness had been changed.  
Thus Happiness was finally estranged  
From the pursuing soul,—thenceforth remaining  
Most disappointing and averse forever,  
To those who seek most eagerly her favor.

## THE ESTRANGEMENT OF HAPPINESS.

## III.

STILL Happiness remembers tenderly  
Her old love for the soul, before the day  
When Hope's eye wounded her with scornful ray,  
Ere she had borne the blame of memory.  
And sometimes, when with such authority  
Duty commands, the whole will doth obey ;  
Or when the visionary thoughts survey  
Some lofty phase of Nature's harmony ;  
And Hope in awe and silent reverence lets  
Pursuit abate, while Memory holds in view  
Only her records of the always true,  
All her estrangement Happiness forgets,  
And lavishes upon the soul once more  
Her favor, still more precious than before.

## UNHONORED WORTH.

---

“All that Nature made thy own  
Will like thy shadow follow thee.”

---

**A**RT slighted and neglected? Dost consume,

Unloved, the number of thy earthly days?

Who most deserves the tribute pity pays?

If beauteous, amiable light illumine

Thy inner soul, how sad the torpid gloom

Of any heart, that 'neath the warming rays

Out-streaming from thy spirit, yet delays

To beautify itself with love's sweet bloom!

Or other minds perhaps do not admire

Thy natural gifts — do not to thee assign

The rank among thy peers that should be thine;—

For shame! Insult not Nature! Why require

Of others confirmation and assent,

To make thee with her chosen gifts content?

“THOUGH NAUGHT THEY MAY TO  
OTHERS BE.”

---

IF in these thoughts of mine that now assuage  
The tedium of the toilsome life I live,  
The few who chance to notice should perceive  
Nothing their lasting interest to engage,  
And quickly cease to turn the farther page,  
It were a shameful thing if I should grieve.  
For if kind Destiny has chosen to give  
To other minds, in many a clime and age,  
Days brighter than my hours, should I repine?  
And what if by an over-hasty glance  
Some import be not heeded, or, perchance,  
Too dim a light upon the pages shine?  
Would I be wronged, even though the wealth I own  
And not the less enjoy, were all unknown?

PERPETUAL YOUTH.

---

And ever beautiful and young remains  
Whom the divine ambrosia sustains.

---

THE days of youth ! The days of glad life-gain !

How bright in retrospection they appear !

Yet standing in my manhood's stature here,

I ask not Time his fleet hours to refrain.

The joyance of those days may yet remain.

Fly on swift seasons ! Not with grief or fear

I see your speed increase from year to year ;—

The soul may still its bouyant youth retain !

May, if supplied with its celestial food,

Forever keep so young it will not cease

To grow in strength, in stature to increase

Through all its days, whate'er their multitude.

And lo, ambrosia plentifully grows

On many a field through which thought, culling, goes.

## S O U L - F O O D .

---

“Whence all our spiritual food is brought.”

---

**N**OT every truth can nourish. It behooves  
 A soul to choose its food with care aright,  
 If it would grow in the pure spirit's might.  
 Vainly, with science for its guide, it roves  
 In search of truth, and clearly parts and proves,  
 Unless the verities its guiding light  
 Discovers and illumines to its sight,  
 Augment the objects it admires and loves.  
 For only when the soul in love extends  
 Its sympathy to other life,—acquires  
 Similitude to that which it admires,  
 And thus itself with other being blends,  
 It finds its proper, growth-promoting food —  
 Experience of the beautiful and good.

DISCERNMENT OF THE GOOD AND  
BEAUTIFUL.

---

“And you must love before to you  
There will seem worthiness of love.”

---

THAT all the seasons may bring forth for thee  
Soul-food in thought's wide fields, however wise  
And dilligent thy tilth, 'twill not suffice  
Unless from selfish care thy mind is free.  
The light that to those tender plants shall be  
Most genial is the light of searching eyes  
Long gazing ; and the loving heart supplies  
The warmth that makes them bloom most fragrantly.  
If thou art heedful thus thy land to till,  
Within thy mind's domain there is no field,  
So cold and barren, but has power to yield  
Ambrosia, and with joy thy soul to fill.  
And others to thy garnered store will haste,  
To share with thee the sweets that else would waste.

“THE SOUL IS DYED BY THE  
THOUGHTS.”

---

THE objects whereto the affections move  
Tinge them with their own hues of good and ill ;  
And thus related to the soul, instill  
Their qualities through all its source of love.  
Hence his affection who has naught thereof  
For anything except himself and thee,  
Soon palls the taste with insipidity :|  
While his, so large and free it is enough  
For thee and all things that are fair and good,  
Comes to thee filled with fragrance taken up  
From every overflowing flower cup  
That tints the light of garden, field or wood,  
Wherein his steps in blissful moods have wended,  
When the plant-souls with his in love were blended.

## K I N S H I P .

---

“So light yet sure the bond that binds the world.”

---

I FOUND beside a meadow brooklet bright,  
Spring flowers, whose tranquil beauty seemed to give  
Glad answers as to whence and why we live.  
With pleased delay I lingered while I might,  
Because I thought when they were out of sight,  
No more of joy from them I should receive.  
But now I know absence cannot bereave  
Their loveliness of power to give delight,  
For still my soul with theirs sweet converse holds,  
Through sense more intimate and blest than seeing;—  
A bond of kindred, that includes all being,  
Our lives in conscious union now infolds.  
And O, to me it is enough of bliss  
To know I am, and that such beauty is.

## S C O R N .

---

“Which wisdom holds unlawful ever.”

---

I F on a child of Nature thou bestow  
A scornful thought, a grievous punishment  
Is thine ; for now no longer evident  
Are loving looks Nature was wont to show.  
Yet alters not her favor toward thee so ;—  
Not really does she thy scorn resent ;  
Her heart is too full of divine content  
To feel the troubling passions mortals know.  
'Tis thou, by harboring unjust disdain  
Within thy selfish bosom, who hast marred  
The beaming tenderness of her regard.  
Thy sympathy with her is less, in vain  
Is now each kindly look of hers, each smile  
Of favor thou did'st oft enjoy erewhile.

O P P O R T U N I T Y .  

---

HAS thy pursuit of knowledge been confined  
Within a narrow range by penury,  
And by the hands' hard toil required of thee?  
O, sorely tried! But if God had designed  
A strong, divinely gifted human mind  
Should in the world appear, and grow to be  
A grand exemplar of humanity,  
Perhaps his wisdom, provident and kind,  
Seeking a time and place upon the earth,  
Wherein such noble life might grow and bear  
Its perfect fruitage, beautiful and rare,  
Would choose and foreordain, tried soul, a birth  
Like that assigned to thee! O, squander not  
The opportunity given in thy lot.

T R I U M P H .  

---

**T**HOUGH hard surroundings, like unsparing foes,  
Against thee have prevailed, a victory  
May yet be thine, and noble life may be  
The trophy which thy triumph will disclose.  
The world's great prizes thou must leave for those  
Of better fortune ! Yield them willingly :  
By so much more thy virtue shall be free  
From trammels selfish cares on it impose.  
Famed, far off landscapes thou shalt never view !  
Submit: the bliss denied thee do not crave ;  
And thy attentive soul a sight may have  
Of the omnipresent beautiful and true,  
So clear, 'twill bring thee nearer to thy God,  
Than if thou sought'st his wonders far abroad.

“AN IDLER IN THE LAND.”

---

THE Highest One, I trust, will not despise  
Thy life's oblation, though it be but hours  
Of gratitude and wonder; for in bowers  
Of wildest woodland that remotely lies,  
Known only to the bee that hath not eyes  
For finer lines and hues, he bids his powers  
Cherish most delicately tinted flowers;  
Assuring thus our hearts that he doth prize  
For its own sake the beauty, pure and lowly,  
Of fruitless blossoms. Can he value less  
The dearer, unobtrusive comeliness  
Of a meek human soul, devout and holy;  
Even if, in humbleness of life unknown,  
Conspicuous virtues it have never shown?

## CONSUMMATION.

---

“The grand results of Time.”

---

'T WAS needful that with life of low degree  
But slowly rising, long the earth should teem  
Ere man was born ; and still the guiding scheme  
Seemed not to rest in full maturity.  
For Nature since has so assiduously  
Cherished his growth in spirit, it would seem  
That lofty human souls, in her esteem,  
Are the best trophies of her husbandry.  
And now, as if she neared her final aim,  
She sheds upon them with conspicuous care  
Each fruitful influence, that they may bear  
Great and pure thoughts and deeds of noble fame ;—  
As if her crowning joy were to transmute  
The sum of Time's results into soul-fruit.

## SOUL-SYMMETRY.

---

NOT to win great successes in the fray  
Of right with wrong, nor to create some mould  
Of beauty distant ages shall behold,  
The purpose of thy life should choose its way :—  
The evidence but not the substance they —  
The blossoms that in due time will unfold :  
But if thy rude haste has the bud unrolled,  
Their beauty withers in a summer's day.  
Then let the soul in its integrity  
Be nourished well, and if it come to bear  
Such blooming splendor, far-renowned and rare,  
That distant eyes flock thitherward to see ;  
Or only leaves, its symmetry shall tell  
Of healthful growth :— 'twill please the Master well.

## IN UNISON.

---

**M**AY nevermore a selfish wish of mine  
Grow to a deed, unless a greater care  
For others' welfare in the incitement share.  
O Nature, let my purposes combine,  
Henceforth, in conscious unison with thine,—  
To spread abroad God's gladness and declare  
In living form what is forever fair.  
Meekly to labor in thy great design,  
O, let my little life be given whole!  
If so, by action or by suffering,  
Joy to my fellow creatures I may bring;  
Or, in the lowly likeness of my soul,  
To beautiful creation's countless store  
One form of beauty may be added more.

## DISINTRALLMENT.

DOST strive against thy selfishness in vain ?

Though grieved and shamed that it so oft should fill

Thy weary breast with wrangling clamor, still

Do low importunate desires remain

To vex thy peace of soul ? Thou shalt attain

Thy freedom not alone by power of will

And lofty aspiration ; not until

Thou makest others' benefit and gain

The object of thy earnest, strong endeavor.

And think not even then to disintrall

Thy soul from selfish longings once for all,

Thou must again strive on and on forever

Towards larger liberty. Yet it may be,

Death will have power at once to set thee free.

## LIVE WHILE YOU LIVE.

A VIEW of present life is all thou hast !

Oblivion's cloud, like a high-reaching wall,

Conceals thy former being, and a pall

Hangs o'er the gate through which thou'lt soon have  
passed.

Dost chafe, in these close bounds imprisoned fast ?

Perhaps thy spirit's memory needs, withal,

Such limits, lest vague dimness should befall

Its records of a life-duration vast.

And artfully thy sight may be confined

While thou art dwelling on this earthly isle,

That its exceeding beauty may, the while,

Infuse itself within thy growing mind,

And fit thee, in some future state sublime,

Haply, to grasp a wider range of time.

## [ M E M E N T O M O R I .

LOOK, soul, how swiftly all things onward tend !

Such universal haste betokens need

In Destiny's design of pressing speed.

Speed thou, stay not until thou reach the end !

Upon the haste of Time there may depend

Some far-off good. Thou child of Time, give heed,

That with a willing heart and ready deed,

To Time's great haste thy dole of speed thou lend !

Though beauteous scenes thy onward steps would stay,

Press forward toward the Goal that beckons thee —

The unimagined possibility

Of all the mighty future to assay !

And when thou drawest near thy hour to die,

Rejoice that one accomplishment is nigh.

## “REASON THUS WITH LIFE.”

---

O, LIFE of mine! I am not well assured,  
That the isolation separating thee  
From boundless being would forever be  
Thy highest good. Still to be thus immured  
May well be deemed a precious boon, procured  
For none but favorites of Destiny;—  
Even though the walls of personality,  
When for a little season they've endured,  
Into the Unlimited must surely melt.  
For if thine isolation had not been,  
Sweet life, the many joys of thoughts serene  
That have been mine, had not as mine been felt:  
Still, had'st thou been not wholly separate,  
Joys might have been yet more serene and great.

## SURE CONFIDENCE.

---

“When I heard the Earth song,—”  
I was no more dismayed.

---

WHEN I reflect on Nature's mighty past,  
That far transcends the comprehending mind ;  
And countless years through which it seems designed  
Her unexhausted lifetime yet shall last ;  
And then with these durations, dim and vast,  
Compare the little space before, behind,  
Wherein my earthly being is confined,  
What trivialty on this poor life is cast !—  
Unless my soul clings to one truth sublime ;  
Whereby its self-assurance still it keeps  
While gazing into those abysmal deeps :—  
I'm part of that which was throughout a time  
That reaches far back in eternity,  
And part of that which yet so long shall be.

F E A R L E S S .  

---

U P O N Life's sea how high the billows surge !  
O soul, each bark has need its prow to keep  
Directed well against the wave-fronts steep,  
Nor let from that one line its course diverge.  
But fearest not when such strong waves shall urge  
Thy fragile skiff, such furious tempests sweep  
Thee, helpless, over the tumultuous deep,  
They'll speedily thy being quite submerge ?  
Nay, my eternal home is that great sea !  
Then why should I, though all unskilled and frail,  
Tremble at coming storms, and fear to sail  
The arduous voyage of my destiny ?  
I can but sink again, when tempest-spent,  
Into my home and native element.

## DEATH THE RENEWER.

---

'T WAS in far ancient days it did befall :  
The forms of Nature, filling all the space  
Of their abode, had lost their youthful grace ; —  
The years were sadly withering great and small.  
And when the gods met in their council hall  
To choose out one among their mighty race,  
Who should renew the faded earth's wan face,  
None could perform the task among them all, —  
So strictly do the laws of Fate restrain  
Each to his proper work — save one alone ;  
Death felt the arduous duty was his own.  
Therefore, the sacred synod did ordain,  
And for all time was passed the high decree,  
That Death thenceforth should the Renewer be.

## DEATH AND LOVE.

TOWARD Death Love beareth enmity so great,  
From bitter words he can refrain not long,  
Though hushing fears within his breast are strong.  
And once Death cried to Jove against such hate :  
“ I, serving Life most loyally, whom Fate  
Decrees my master, bear a grievous wrong ;  
For Love, Life’s pensioner, oft joins the throng  
Of them that name me but to execrate ! ”  
Then Jove replied, “ Was it ne’er told to thee  
How blind Love is ? He is Life’s careful friend ; —  
Thy work in dissolution seems to end,  
And so thou seem’st to him Life’s enemy.  
For Love, with his dim vision, the return  
Thou renderest unto Life cannot discern.”

## THE GUILF OF NATURE.

THOU knowest somewhat of Nature's strategems.

Ofttimes, by strong desire, she moves thy will  
To deeds that profit not thyself, but still  
Are needed to promote her cherished schemes:  
And such thy love of earthly being seems,  
And fear of death's undemonstrated ill.

'Tis needful that these human ranks we fill  
A little longer here as Nature deems ;  
So to our weary life vague hope she brings,  
And stills with fear the discontented breast ;  
Lest souls become enamored of their rest,  
And earth too soon abandoned of her kings ;  
Lest dire disorder and calamity  
Be fall the plans of highest Destiny

E U T H A N A S I A .  

---

SEEING our lives by Nature now are led  
In an appointed way so tenderly ;  
So often lured by Hope's expectancy ;  
So seldom driven by scourging pain and dread ;  
And though by destiny still limited  
Insuperably, our pleasant paths seem free : —  
May we not trust it ever thus shall be ?  
That when we come the lonely vale to tread,  
Leading away into the unknown night,  
Our mother then, kindly persuasive still,  
Shall gently temper the reluctant will ?  
So, haply, we shall feel a strange delight,  
Even that dreary way to travel o'er,  
And the mysterious realm beyond explore.



## PROLOGUE TO PART II.

---

'T IS needful there should be some stable forms  
Of faith, to give a resting place and stay  
To wavering virtue, lest the furious storms  
Of evil impulse bear the soul away.  
'Tis needful that on conscious truth we lay  
Foundations for the forms of faith, so sure,  
That come the sweeping tempests whence they may,  
Resting upon unmoving rock secure,  
Those soul-sustaining forms unshaken shall endure.

And well I trust all earnest souls, if each  
Delve in the soil whereon its life has grown,  
A sure foundation for their faith may reach.  
The seeming and uncertain are bestrown  
O'er all experience, yet the surely known,  
Whose truthfulness all minds may apprehend,  
Lies underneath — firm as the floors of stone  
Below earth's varied surface, that extend  
The same where valleys sink and stately hills ascend.

O brother, though I seem not well to found  
My joy and confidence in love divine,  
Though only few have chosen adjacent ground,  
Whose surface seems to give as doubtful sign  
Of solid rock beneath as this of mine,  
Whereon to build belief; although thou trace  
No common stay between my faith and thine,  
Connecting while it severs them in space,  
Yet deeply they may rest upon the same sure base.

And if the edifice of faith I rear

Upon foundations that have seemed to me

Both steadfast and secure, to thee appear

Of scant dimensions, blame not hastily

The ground whereon it rests. It well may be

If I had delved more widely, and laid bare

A broader underlying certainty,

A risen structure would have stood even there,

As high as thou hast built — as stately and as fair.

Yet, brother, scorn not the abode wherein

My soul with peace and comfort doth reside ;

For it hath spacious, lightsome rooms within :

Hath one with outlook unobscured and wide,

Whereinto shine the stars on every side ;

Where hope finds refuge when by fear sore pressed.

For signs of Highest Goodness, verified

By clear responses heard within the breast,

Have builded for my soul a bower of holy rest.

Hath one, that often to the externally  
Beholding, shows a gloomy look within ;  
For evidence of sad necessity  
Requiring conflict, suffering and sin,  
And all the ills that are, or e'er have been  
Hath reared its walls : yet if my spirit choose  
Therein to dwell awhile, its sight can win,  
Of human life and ruling laws, such views  
As with contentful peace the feeling thought infuse.

It hath another, whose transparent sides  
Consist of clear persuasions that all light  
Has come from heaven. Within it Doubt abides,  
And for all outward radiance claims a right  
To enter — both the beautiful and bright  
And that which clouds reflect of sombre hue.  
Yet oft my soul there stays the livelong night :  
For in the darksome hours 'tis only through  
Clear, crystal walls can pass gleams of the fair and true.

And one, whose consecrated space no sound  
But thanksgiving and adoration knows.  
Confirmed beliefs in Mind that hath no bound,  
And in all being lives and rules, compose  
The lasting structure of its walls that rose  
As if by power of music ; when the sign  
Of conscious purpose, Nature often shows,  
Did with the reasoning consciousness combine  
To form a silent chord — faith in a Thought Divine.



PART II.

—

FAITH.



## LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

---

“Though Nature, red in tooth and claw,  
With ravin shrieked against his creed.”

---

HOW oft, when seamen on a wreck from whence  
The foaming billows soon must sweep them, plead  
With Heaven for help in that drear hour of need,  
The storm roars on, none of its rage relents !  
Such harsh succession of the earth's events,  
And early deaths whereof there seems no heed  
In Nature's heart, might make us doubt, indeed,  
If aught but selfish strife of the elements,  
The ordinations of the world controls !  
Yet in the Uncreated there must be  
A source of predetermined tendency  
Which shapes at least a few sweet human souls —  
Of goodness and of beauty types serene —  
Else one my heart has loved would ne'er have been.

## FIDEI FUNDAMENTUM.

---

“If I but remember only,  
Such as these have lived and died.”

---

MY soul's grief can not rightfully atone  
Even for one hour of an ungrateful mood.  
Our blessings lay a debt of gratitude  
Upon us, that remains when they have flown.  
Sweet, disembodied soul! O, you have shown,  
In the unselfish aims your life pursued,  
So clear an evidence that God is good,  
My trust in Him no faltering should have known;  
Nor can I ever with just reason fear  
As one who feels no firm ground for his faith;  
Even though you were not saved from early death!  
Even though I never more on earth shall hear  
The soft tones of your words so true and wise,  
Nor see the tender glow of your dear eyes.

## NO SECONDARY CAUSE OF LOVE.

---

NO chance from selfish motives could compose  
The unselfish goodness we have known to be.  
That which in human hearts we sometimes see,  
In Nature's heart pure goodness doth disclose.  
Search ye its forming cause? Your science throws  
In vain its light upon that mystery.  
Thou Cause beyond our knowledge! thanks to thee  
For all unselfish love life ever shows: —  
For every action of self-sacrifice,  
Country or race or kindred to defend;  
For every kindly thought of friend for friend  
That e'er was told by looks of meeting eyes,  
Whereby our doubting minds may clearly prove  
That in thy Being is a source of love.

UBIQUE ET SEMPER.

---

I.

**L**OVE that regards not self we daily feel !  
 Rejoice my soul, that thou such love dost know ;  
 And should the wise, defining clearly, show  
 The power of love, with its true warmth and zeal,  
 In many an instinct lower lives reveal,  
 Rejoice no less. But on no aim bestow  
 The name of love unless it outward go—  
 Abandon self to work another's weal.  
 O spirit of Love, dost thou indeed pervade  
 All the degrees of Being ? All the more  
 Will I thy omnipresent power adore !  
 Although thy function in each lower grade  
 Dim knowledge to our minds of thee imparts,  
 'Till thou revealest thyself in human hearts.

## UBIQUE ET SEMPER.

## II.

SHOW me that lower instincts have ascended

During vast time in slow gradation due,

'Till to the height of human love they grew!

Yea, even that these arose from force expended

In orbits of primeval atoms blended

In the old chaos! Joyful were such view

Of the unselfish impulse, active through

The world's vast former lifetime, and extended

Beyond into eternity foregone.

If ancient atom-pulses have become

Through favoring concurrence, in their sum,

Motives that to all kindly deeds lead on

The human soul, doubt not they always strove

In the direction, with the aim of love.

“HE THAT FORMED THE EYE SHALL  
HE NOT SEE?”

---

I F love has been created, if it flows  
Not forth immediately from the Divine ;  
If to bring aught to pass along some line  
Of His great scheme, it pleased God to compose  
Love out of elements that ne'er disclose  
The power and aim of love till they combine,  
The inward thought that must be, ere design  
To outward, realized existence grows,  
Would still support our trust that God is good.  
Though He who formed the eye see not with eyes,  
Yet must the earliest purpose to devise  
Sight for the yet unseeing, have pursued,  
As final object, that which adumbrated  
The vision then existing, uncreated.

R E V E A L E D .  

---

O, JUDGE not Nature by the mantle cold  
That wraps the wintry earth and all its graves,  
Nor by the summer landscape as it waves  
Beneath the breeze. To thee was never told  
The meaning those external views infold ;  
In vain thy soul with theirs communion craves.  
But if the power of life to thee yet saves  
Dear human fellowship, and thou canst hold  
Within thy heart the joys and griefs that swell  
Another's heart, whene'er with blest surprise  
Deeply-illumined, softly-glowing eyes  
Meet with thy own, thou understandest well  
What Nature then reveals to thee. O, rest  
Thy thought of her on what thou knowest best.

## NO WASTE OF LIFE.

---

And early deaths whereof there seems no heed  
In Nature's heart, —

---

**H**EAR what self-vindicating Nature saith:—

“ In hymeneal songs I tell my mirth.

My yearning endeth in each new life's birth  
That fullness of my love inheriteth.

My hardest strife is to prolong the breath

Of helpless young, in danger, cold and dearth.

My tears in parents' eyes bedew the earth  
Beside the monuments of early death.

I, heedless that so many must forego

Life's sweetness after one short moment's taste?

Each brief existence proves I will not waste  
One drop of precious life, but will bestow

On each, with equal, unremitting care,

Its least and greatest law-appointed share.”

## THE EARLIEST NEED.

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“That self might be annulled—its bondage prove  
The fetters of a dream opposed to love.”

---

**M**OURN that man's soul is selfish, but defame  
 Not Nature. Thy regrets 't will soothe to heed  
 His spirit's adolescence. Thou 'lt concede  
 One want may his first efforts justly claim.  
 To grow must needs be the young soul's first aim,  
 Yea, duty ! and the motives which this need  
 Begets, and rears into accomplished deed,  
 Though selfish, do not all deserve thy blame.  
 When such maturity the soul attains,  
 That care of self may cease, then it extends  
 Its sympathy to other lives, and blends  
 Its joy with theirs, its sorrow with their pains ;  
 And finds through consciousness of brotherhood  
 Its own desire sufficed by others' good.

## COMPLAINTS AND ANSWERS.

## I.

WHEREFORE, O Nature, thy excessive zeal?

Thy aims are doubtless right but oft the deed

Of time and place appears to take no heed,

And therefore not to reach the general weal.

'Tis not that thou should'st less profusely deal: —

We chide thee not because the ripened seed

So oft surpasses all apparent need —

Such care thou seemest for thy types to feel.

But when thou seest death invade our life,

'Gainst his approach thou dost protest through pain,

Sometimes prevailing, and sometimes in vain :

O why, when hope remains not in the strife,

Dost thou prolong thy ineffectual plea

Of agony, for life that cannot be ?

## COMPLAINTS AND ANSWERS.

## II.

THINK not, my children, that the spring's bare plain  
Alone incites my care of seeds,— know ye,  
The very germs of life are dear to me,  
Although their hope of growth they ne'er attain.  
And call not *fruitless pangs* my protest vain  
Against the near destroying power I see  
Approach a life I love too tenderly.  
Behold the struggling life itself is pain !  
And can ye find it in your hearts to blame  
My ceaseless love, and charge it with excess,  
Because when life's low fire grows less and less,  
And now burns only with a flickering flame,  
I will not quench it, nor the faintest spark  
That lingers yet awhile ere all is dark ?

## COMPLAINTS AND ANSWERS.

## III.

THE best of human rulers oft forego  
A wonted law-enforcement, if it lead  
To grievous hardship. Laws by thee decreed,  
O Sovereign Nature, are not tempered so  
By mercy, but alike through joy and woe  
Unanswering, unrelenting, still proceed!  
Forsooth of fixed succession there is need,  
That thinking beings may their future know.  
Yet such slight swerving as would oft avert  
Unmeasured anguish, scarce could make us lose  
Faith in our prescience. Still thou dost refuse.  
Does order so much more control exert  
In thy heart than in ours — or so much less  
The care of sentient creature's happiness?

## COMPLAINTS AND ANSWERS.

## IV.

YE well may grieve, O children, if it seem  
My constancy to order e'er impedes  
The granting of one boon for which love pleads !  
Within my heart the longing is supreme  
To give and cherish life, and none will deem  
The love of mere unloving order leads  
My just, undeviating course, who heeds  
The vast repleteness of the world's life-scheme.  
Of life, real and potential, know ye well,  
The universe is full ! My pulses waste  
No intermediate efforts while they haste  
From life to life its progress to impel.  
Where'er my law-directed purpose tends,  
The means through which it passes all are ends.

## THE COVENANT.

THE properties of the elements, if scanned  
When thought is clearest, seem the seal extant  
Of an inviolate, solemn covenant,  
Wherein has been with plain distinctness planned  
A scheme of bounty that unchanged shall stand.  
Omnipotence is firmly bound to grant  
Each promised favor, which the feeblest want,  
Assured of full performance, may demand.  
Each particle of being, though but dust,  
That flies and whirls according to the laws  
Of outward and of inward forces, draws  
Its proper share in the allotment just  
Of help divine, toward the one perfect end  
Whither created beings strive and tend.

## NO PROMISE BROKEN.

---

JUSTICE of God, O most impartially  
Thou judgest ! Though we scarce can bear the light,  
Of heavenly emanations, pure and bright,  
As thy divine, transcendent equity.  
The lowest worm will ne'er be wronged by thee ;  
Though the denial to so mean a wight  
Of some small portion of its lawful right,  
Would save a noble life from agony,  
And grant a boon besought with urgent prayer.  
Thy sentence is that promises divine,  
Which Nature's laws promulgate and define,  
Shall not to one be broken, though its share  
Of favor be so small, 't would seem not hard  
So low and mean a thing to disregard.

## FIXED FATE.

A MONG the sons of God the Accuser came  
And said : “ Your willing virtue is not free :  
That which ye are doth lay necessity  
Upon your choice — ye must and will the same.  
The Eternal Will cannot exemption claim  
From laws the Eternal Being doth decree :  
Effect and cause are linked unchangeably,  
Constructing Destiny’s unyielding frame.”  
Then answered he, the Clearly Seeing called :  
“ True, O Accuser, as thy words have shown,  
The effect that is was possible alone !  
But thinkest thou our hearts can be appalled  
By that wherein we find assurance blest ?  
The Possible is one, since ’t is the best.”

## THE BIRTH OF SORROW.

---

WHEN Sorrow first appeared in Heaven of yore,  
The angels by the voice of Fame beguiled,  
Believed he sprang from God's unreconciled  
Resentment toward some wrong that vexed him sore.  
But strange it seemed — they marvelled more and more —  
That one of mien so meek, and look so mild,  
Should be of such stern parentage the child ;  
Till heavenly Truth her tidings to them bore :  
“ This beauteous stranger seraph whom ye see,  
Is offspring of that Hierarch benign,  
Who reconciles in unison divine,  
The perfect peace of present Deity  
And strifes through which Creation's work goes on,—  
Of God's great Patience ye behold the son.”

## THE WORK OF EVIL.

---

IN the great Hierarchy of the skies  
The seat of Harmony is next the Throne,  
To the angels, times and places to make known  
Wherein obedient zeal to act should rise.  
Now Satan's fall of old was in this wise :  
Once, when desire that just before had flown  
Warm from the Eternal Heart, throbb'd in his own,  
With Harmony not waiting to advise,  
He flew in haste the prompting pulse to obey.  
Thus he estranged the highest harmony ;  
And then not knowing how to make agree,  
His works with Nature's wants, became the prey  
Of unadapted impulse,— and he still,  
Striving to do the good, does only ill.

## THE OFFICE OF SORROW.

---

BETWEEN the world-directing Harmony  
And Evil — who 't is said in Heaven once bore  
A name remembered on the earth no more —  
Estrangement grew to such high enmity,  
The peace of Heaven was brought in jeopardy,—  
Contentious thoughts that ne'er were known before  
Vexing celestial bosoms o'er and o'er!  
Still the Supreme chose not by stern decree  
To exercise His high arbitrament;  
But summoning a seraph from among  
His waiting messengers, one fair and young,  
Sorrow by name, him graciously he sent,  
On Evil's restless ardor to impose  
Restraining guidance of experienced woes.

## RECONCILIATION.

---

ALTHOUGH at first impetuous Evil spurns  
Sorrow's restraints, they grow in strength until  
The purpose of their being they fulfill,  
And Harmony no more offence discerns.  
But Evil with unlesened longing years  
Toward the divine activity ; and still,  
When pulses of divine incitement thrill  
His being, with intemperate zeal he burns.  
Therefore must constant Sorrow yet restrain  
His zealous ardor, that his deeds may be  
Acceptable to highest Harmony.  
And thus it seems it ever shall remain : —  
As moderating guardian till the end,  
Sorrow on Evil closely shall attend.

## S O U L - L I G H T .

HAVE reverent faith in every spirit's light !

Doubt not 't is from that sun whose effluence

Diffuseth widely God's intelligence —

The faint reflections from the clouds of night,

No less than day's warm beams, direct and bright.

Have faith in every spirit's inner sense

To feel the sameness and the difference

Of light-impressions made upon its sight.

But the results of definition, doubt,

That limits by our knowledge outward things.

This is the source whence all our error springs ;

For of the mystic universe without,

We know the nearest part does not reflect

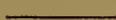
Its perfect image to the intellect.

## SUBJECTIVE TRUTH.

---

WHEN of the elements which sense supplies,  
Ideas are through definition wrought,  
These then become the molecules of thought  
That into creeds and dogmas crystallize.  
And all creeds that spontaneously arise  
Are shaped by Nature's forming hand,— in naught  
Are crystal gems to more perfection brought,  
With all the exactness of their symmetries.  
But if beliefs are shaped unerringly  
By Nature, are they to her facts untrue?  
They are not so save to an outer view.  
With outward facts they all may disagree,  
But with the inward still they harmonize —  
True always to the minds wherein they rise.

## THE MENTAL SPECTRUM.



OF the reflected rays of soul-light, few  
From nearest objects reach the intellect ;  
And formed beliefs within the mind deflect  
And part them variously while passing through,—  
Making the images they cast not true  
To outward things. Yet 't is by this defect  
Of mind-transparency that we detect  
Most beauteous beams, else hidden from our view.  
'T is thus the falling rain drops, half opaque,  
The clear, uncolored sunbeam decompose ;  
Yet the refracted light which through them flows  
Is that which God selects, when he would make  
A sign to gladden every creature's eye,  
And sets his rainbow in the evening sky.

## THE PERMANENCE OF TRUTH.

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“All the forms are fugitive,  
But the substances survive.”

---

OUR creeds of living essence of the mind  
 Consist, of conscious life-experience,  
 Which by the lights and shades of evidence  
 Has into formed ideas been defined.

And though full many a creed may have declined  
 Within our souls, they failed not wholly thence :  
 Their substance shares the spirit's permanence  
 Though to decay their forms have been consigned.

And should the essence of the mind remain  
 Fixed in one form, with no progressive change ?  
 Through higher, fairer ranks no longer range  
 The unfulfilled Ideal to attain ?

Nature not always will permit to hold  
 Her liveliest substance in one hardened mould.

## CRUMBLLED FORMS.

---

WHEN we look backward to the early rise  
Of human thought — to Faith's far distant youth,  
We see in old beliefs, strange and uncouth,  
Much that all earnest souls forever prize,  
Though many a present creed we quite despise ;  
Because form-crumbling years have freed, forsooth,  
Those ancient faiths from falsehood, while their truth,  
Substantial, still remains beneath our eyes.  
But loving souls are strengthened by discerning  
The truth in every faith on which they brood ;  
Long ere its form, perhaps unfit and rude,  
And hardened in the flames of zeal still burning,  
The crumbling power of lapsing time has felt ;  
For by their softening warmth all forms they melt.

## GROWTHS FROM THE SOUL.

---

'T IS pleasant wending peacefully and slow  
Among the creeds, in thought's warm, still retreat,  
To note their outward contrasts, and to greet  
The inward harmonies of soul they show.  
The roots of all strike deeply, far below  
In spirit-substance. Rising, they may meet  
Misshaping influence, but life-sap sweet  
They draw from out the soil whereon they grow.  
And throughout all that wondrous wilderness,  
From every bough a spirit fragrance drips,  
And fruit hangs down even to the hungry lips  
Of him who through the forest dares to press.  
And underneath each lofty growth are found  
Sweet flowers of feeling, covering all the ground.

## THE DIMNESS OF HISTORY.

---

FOR me, dense ignorance beclouds past time,  
Except the little space that memory clears ;  
Save when my ear, with eager listening, hears  
Wise men, whom Destiny permits to climb  
Earth's speculative heights, serene, sublime ;  
As they narrate how to their sight appears  
The far extending retrospect of years —  
Even far away toward human story's prime.  
But, ah me, they report so variously !  
And no fit umpire, I, with measured line  
From point to point those objects to define,  
Which they upon the heights but darkly see !  
I only feel in this one faith secure,—  
Then were, as now, the just and good and pure.

## THE TEST OF TRUTH.

---

IF ye have precious truths that yet remain  
Unknown to me, O teach me them! Each way  
Into my soul I open wide, that they  
May enter straightway and belief constrain.  
But urge not fear of loss nor hope of gain  
To rouse my will, and move it to essay  
To shape my soul's belief, or tinge one ray  
Of Nature's light! All willful faith must pain  
The Genius of true Faith, who asks assent,  
Not even to dearest truths, until the hour  
Arrives of their belief-compelling power;  
In order that the force they will have spent  
In wrestling with our unbelief, at length  
May be transformed into believing strength.

## RECOMPENSE OF DOUBT.

“There is more faith in honest doubt,  
Believe me, than in half your creeds.”

## I.

AN angel whose delight is to dispense  
God's truth, thus to a prophet gave command:  
“Take now this truth, and going through the land  
Teach it in form that fits the intelligence  
Of them that hear;— a blessed consequence  
Succeeds true faith.” \* \* \* But when the prophet  
scanned  
His finished work, and saw a blessing hand  
Distribute faith's rewards, he took offence.  
For some souls who appeared to have full well  
Accepted all the message he declared  
From Heaven, had in the heavenly blessing shared  
Even less than others, who, most strange to tell,  
In doubt, on farther scrutiny intent,  
Still to a truth of God delayed assent.

## RECOMPENSE OF DOUBT.

## II.

THE prophet to the angel then addressed  
Complaining words: "With credence undelayed  
These willingly accepted all I said.  
Why are not they conspicuously blessed?"  
And thus the angel answered: "Though professed  
So promptly, yet this faith does not pervade  
Their being,—only on the surface laid  
And lightly by thy power thereon impressed.  
The doctrine thou hast offered them they take  
With languid scrutiny, assent inert.  
Not thus can truth its conquering force exert!  
And only souls that full resistance make,  
Are, when convinced, assimilated well  
Unto the truth. Let it belief compel!"

## RECOMPENSE OF DOUBT.

## III.

“**T**HOU Bearer of God’s truth to men, O why  
 Have these, who yet have no belief confessed,  
 Received of faith’s rewards the most and best?”

“They have believed,” the angel made reply,  
 “And now in words of thine new proof descry,  
 That every verity, in form expressed  
 Befitting well the intelligence addressed,  
 And with clear light illumined to the eye,  
 Has power to win of souls their due assent.

This, realized by them in all its force,  
 Has of their heavenly blessing been the source;—  
 By faith in truth and in the soul content  
 To wait, serenely calm, the coming hour  
 Of truth’s authentic, soul-convincing power.”

## [ THE OFFICE OF UNBELIEF.

---

TRUTH has prevailing power 'gainst all reply,  
The due effect whereof she cannot lose,  
Except when arrogant beliefs refuse  
To let the reason scan and testify.  
But Unbelief will be thy firm ally,  
O Truth, and will remain, if her thou choose,  
Most faithful, though defaming tongues accuse  
Her faithfulness, and say she will deny  
Thy right to enter souls! She does but strive  
To keep thy beautiful abodes unmarred  
By lawless occupancy, and to guard  
Against wrong ingress until thou arrive;  
And with a voice of unmistakable tone,  
Demand and gain entrance into thine own.

## TILL CLEARER LIGHT.

---

**A**LTHOUGH we may not choose nor hold a creed  
Because the heart's strong yearning it contents,  
Yet whatsoe'er belief with fact consents,  
And satisfies within the soul the need  
Of harmony,—giving a clew to lead  
The unperplexed, assured intelligence  
Through all the mazes of experience,  
Reason may to our lives strong want concede.  
For 'tis the work of Truth to reconcile  
All discords; and whatever in her name  
Fulfills her arduous function, well may claim  
Of loyal souls to be received, meanwhile,  
Till superseded by an embassy  
Of higher grade in Truth's vicegerency.

D I F F U S I V E   B E A U T Y .

---

THE presence of the beautiful ye know  
By one sure sign, in only one blest hour ;  
'T is only when ye feel your souls' own dower  
Of beauty larger, more contentful, grow.  
And all its outward sway doth beauty owe  
Unto its widely self-diffusing power,  
That radiates from the petals of a flower,  
From lines and angles of a flake of snow ;  
That makes the stars shed peace serene and great  
On troubled minds through upward looking eyes ;  
One noble action of self-sacrifice  
The daily lives of millions elevate ;  
And clear, accordant songs of souls sublime  
Echo from kindred souls through endless time.

## F O R M A T I V E   B E A U T Y .

---

W H E N E ' E R the atoms into forms combine,  
The grouping, shaping forces seem to owe  
Allegiance to the beautiful, and show  
Beauty has power to mould and to define.  
Its blessed presence seems a potent sign  
Which e'en obdurate elements well know ;  
Toward it alone will Nature's favors flow,  
Even with its measure metes the Grace divine.  
For when, attent, the beautiful we view,  
And radiant beauty enters through the sight,  
The soul is filled with hope and deep delight ;  
As if its being were assured anew ;—  
As if the right to be had been bestowed  
Only where Beauty maketh its abode.

## THE POWER OF THE IDEAL.

---

THE forms that are do not alone decide  
The course of plastic Nature: rights of these  
Limit the power of onward tendencies;  
But forms to be, the shaping effort guide.  
Mark what the mental vision verified  
By reason, in rebounding bodies sees!  
When equipoise of clashing energies  
Is reached, the undriven atoms backward glide—  
A form that was and is not, but shall be,  
Determining the swift, exact recoil.  
And likewise witnesseth the artist's toil,  
That still unfashioned forms most potently  
Arouse and rule efforts to make them real,  
Through Beauty's power, efficient though ideal.

RECOGNITION OF THE FINAL CAUSE.

---

NOT ours to know the purposes that guide  
The aims of Nature, but when they are brought  
Within our souls, we then are clearly taught  
The power of final causes to decide  
The *modes* wherein the energies abide.  
Belief therein we need to build our thought  
Of every natural process, and 'tis wrought  
Deep in all theories our minds have tried.  
We need it realized forevermore  
Full clearly, with all cogency of proof  
Through varied instance, for the heart's behoof:  
For what have we to love or to adore,  
Unless we feel wise purpose justly reigns  
Over a world of strifes and toils and pains.

P A R T I A L R E A D I N G S .

---

THOUGH the great Scroll wherein have been outlined  
By Nature, thoughts of God, deep and immense,  
We can not read, yet gleams of meaning thence  
At times shine on us, clear, distinct, defined.  
Hence comes assurance that the human mind  
Though weak in reason, and obtuse in sense,  
Still owns a share of that intelligence  
Whereby the great World-builder has designed  
The wondrous plans which Nature's works disclose.  
A child who scans the philosophic page  
Of some profoundly meditative sage,  
May see familiar phrases,— then he knows  
That his own simple thoughts and childish lore  
Are part of the great scholar's mental store.

L I G H T - G L E A M S .  

---

GOD'S glory, lest it blind our human sight,  
Hath been behind material forms concealed ;  
Yet to our eyes brief glimpses are revealed  
Of radiance we must deem divinely bright.  
For hast thou not had moments when such light  
Has gleamed upon thy soul, 't was forced to yield  
Its worship? In a throng or lonely field,  
'Mid day's effulgence or the gloom of night,  
When gazing on a landscape, star or cloud,  
Strong rapture seized thee, and before a view  
Of the forever Beautiful and True,  
In reverence profound thy spirit bowed  
For one brief moment ; then the vision passed.  
O, that such gleams of the divine would last !

## THE DIVINE IMMANENCE.

---

“All are but parts of one stupendous whole,  
Whose body Nature is, and God the soul.”

### I.

GOD from the world distinguish,—from the great  
But known Effect, the unknown greater Cause!  
From aught our minds conceive, that which but awes  
Our souls with thoughts that past their bounds dilate.  
But call these twain not wholly separate.  
Confess that every natural process draws  
Its moving power through channels, which as laws  
Within the heart of God originate.  
And may there not be nerves which from the seat  
Of the Divine Intelligence arise  
And reach the world's remotest boundaries?  
Unfelt are these by us,—they do not beat  
Like arteries of Law even to their ends  
When the great Heart its life-pulsations sends.

## THE DIVINE IMMANENCE.

---

“If we could see and hear,  
The vision, were it not He?”

## II.

NO doubt a wise philosopher was he  
Who called the Universe “Thought petrified ;”  
But does a whole truth in his words abide?  
Perchance the Thought Divine not really  
Is petrified : all this solidity  
May be my sense of being, that outside  
My own continues, and so unallied,  
It but resists,—yields me no sympathy.  
But if the hills and valleys are to One,  
O soul of mine, as now thy subtile essence  
Is unto me, through a pervading presence,  
And through the inner life’s experience known,  
To Him their substance may appear as free  
From stony hardness, even as thine to me !

“THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL  
ENDURE FOREVER.”

---

THE forces that prevail eternally,  
 And those that seem to quickly vanish hence,  
 Are emanations from Omnipotence  
 Of self-conserving, ceaseless energy.  
 And whatso in the changeless entity  
 Of God originates, partaketh thence  
 Of the divine, essential permanence :—  
 Whatever is because He is, shall be.  
 O, then to strengthen trust, thyself assure,  
 In every fearful, every doubting mood,  
 From God came forth the Beautiful and Good ;  
 And as the Eternal Glory shall endure,  
 They in His changelessness shall still abide  
 Unwasted, mid destruction far and wide.

## THE RECEDING PERFECT.

“NO man may look upon my face and live!”

'Tis well he veils perfection from our sight;

And if because of visions clear and bright,

Which raptured souls in ecstasy achieve,

They deem assuredly that they perceive

A perfect type of the Eternal Beauty —

Truth absolute, the final Goal of Duty —

That day they suffer death without reprieve!

Since one activity within the mind,

Through which its highest life is manifest —

One effort toward the unattained Best,

Must then its final check and limit find:

'T is satisfied, it makes no farther quest,

It can but sink to death's unending rest!

C O M P E N S A T I O N .  

---

GOD asks from creatures for his plenitude  
Of goodness, no return. Without the hire  
Of prayer or praise or love, till they expire  
He feeds the teeming earth's unthankful brood.  
That each demand shall with the general good  
Of all consist, his justice must require ;  
And to his yearning bounty, such desire  
Ascends a grateful offering, like food  
To weary, fainting men whom famine gnaws.  
The creature need affords a counterpart  
To the outflowing of the Mighty Heart.  
Recurrent stream of love ! supply it draws  
From wants of all created life, and pours  
Replenishment into love's primal source.

“PERFECT LOVE CASTETH OUT FEAR.”

---

FEAR thou a creature with self-guarding fear.

Too far from thee for sympathy, the ill

Thou offerest him he may return, until

The hard requital brings thee penance drear.

But fear not so the One to thee so near

His being doth include thy own — His will

Rewilling thy volitions, doth fulfill

Their aims through powers that not in thine inhere.

And O, beware lest thy distrusting doubt

Dishonor Love divine, and the attribute

Of narrow finitude to it impute

By deeming any soul can be without

Its blest embrace. At once each fear reprove

And hush by faith in all-including love.

## THE RIGHT ETERNAL.

---

“The wrong that pains my soul below,  
I dare not throne above.”

---

IF any, as an advocate who pleads  
Religion's cause, shall to mankind proclaim  
The rule and test of right is not the same  
For motives whence a human act proceeds,  
And purposes of God's great sovereign deeds,—  
That right, forsooth, by God's command became,  
Beware of the false prophet! In the name  
Of Faith's defender, he avers what needs  
Must the foundation of all faith remove.  
For what supports even your most holy trust  
That all is well, and will be with the just,  
If your clear intuitions do not prove  
The laws of right which pure souls apprehend,  
Unchanged, throughout all time and space extend.

## THE CRITERION OF REVELATION.

---

  
I.

THUS spake Elisha to the Shunamite :

“The angel of the Lord, with voice to dread,  
Has bidden that thy son, raised from the dead,  
Be offered a burnt-offering on the height  
Of Carmel! He who gave thy heart’s delight,  
Twice pitying thee, now bids that it be laid  
Upon His altar.” But the woman said,  
“O, man of God! ne’er would that cruel rite  
Be claimed by Him who gave me back my boy.  
Some evil spirit has thy ear deceived.  
I know that He who pitied when I grieved  
And turned the anguish of my heart to joy,  
Would not desire such painful sacrifice —  
No incense sweet to Him would thence arise.”

## THE CRITERION OF REVELATION.

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### II.

“**H**AST thou the wisdom to determine when  
 Commands from Heaven are His, and when not so?  
 How can a heart He trieth if it show  
 Bold disobedience, ever hope again?”  
 The prophet spake, but not less boldly then  
 The woman :— “ Well His goodness do I know.  
 My faith therein no words can overthrow,  
 Spoken by angels or by holy men.  
 He tries me by this test? It cannot be  
 He so delighteth in obedience  
 That He would break a heart to draw it thence.  
 No proof thereof would make Him pleased to see  
 A mother’s agony, though hushed her cries,  
 When yielding up her child for sacrifice.”

## THE CRITERION OF REVELATION.

## III.

ELISHA sped away to Carmel's wild,  
And to the Lord thus prayed with many a tear :  
“ Be merciful to her who will not hear  
Thy word, though Thou did'st raise to life her child ! ”  
And the Lord answered with reproof though mild :  
“ For her thou need'st not my displeasure fear !  
An evil spirit did deceive thine ear.  
Now learn of her to be no more beguiled ;  
For, mindful of the favor to her given,  
She in my goodness hath abiding faith ;  
And whatso'er of me another saith,  
Although the words may seem to come from Heaven,  
She ponders well, and tries it by the test  
Of that which in her heart she findeth best.”

















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